1: Allen H-4 (no date) 1932 RI1 Georgia RI1

The eastern Caucasus had been famous at least from Achæmenian times as the land of natural fires, and the neighbouring Persian province had borrowed the fame in its name Azerbaijan—*ader-badagan*, the "garden of fire". From the early days of the Arab rule in Shirvan extensive industrial use was made of the petroleum of the Apsheron peninsula. el-Masudi speaks of Baku and "the Naptha country", and Yakuti, himself a native of the place, states that two hundred mule loads a day were, in his time, exported. Marco Polo, who did not himself pass through the Caucasus, had heard tell of Baku oil.

> "On the confines towards Georgiana", he says, "there is a fountain from which oil springs in great abundance, insomuch that a hundred shiploads might be taken from it at one time. This oil is not good to use with food, but it's good to burn and is also used to anoint camels that have the mange. People come from a vast distance to fetch it, for in all the countries round, they have no other oil." [1]

Barbaro's description is as usual distinguished by a certain crude realism in detail.

> "Upon this side of the sea there is another citie called Bachu, whereof the sea of Bachu taketh name, neere unto which citie, there is a mountaigne that casteth foo'the blacke oyle stynkeng horryblye, which they nevertheless use for furnissheng of their lightes, and for the anoynteng of their camells, twies a yere. For if they were not anoynted they wolde become skabbie." [2]

Among products of a more special character, the people of the Caucasus were noted for their caviar,[3] their armour and their falcons. In parts of Daghestan, according to el-Masudi, "*most of the inhabitants are employed in making coats of mail, stirrups, bridles, swords and similar instruments of iron*".[4] Marco Polo had heard the fame of the bowmen of Georgia, and el-Masudi records that from the district of Shulaveri on the Armenian marches, came the prized battle-axes called "Shulaverdian"—"*which are in use with the Sid bihab and other Barbarian corps*".[5] Again, Polo says of Georgia, that "*the country produces the best goshawks in the world, which are called Avighé*",[6] and el-Masudi has a dissertation on the falcons of the Caspian coasts and of Armenia.

[1] Polo (Yule), I, 46.
[2] Barbaro, 88.
[3] el-Masudi, I, 438.
[4] *Idem*, I, 433.
[5] *Idem*, I, 461, see *Encyclopædia of Islam* under Sayabidja, article by G. Ferrand, who states that these people were pre-Islamic emigrants from Sumatra to India, and later to Iraq. They were generally employed by the Arabs as guards and gaolers.
[6] Polo (Yule), I, 50.